

REMARKS

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the many courtesies extended during an interview on December 17, 2003, during which time Applicants' representative, Mr. Schneider, was present in person and Applicants' representative, Mr. Farmer participated by telephone.

With respect to the rejection based upon the patent to Hartig et al, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's interpretation of the reference. The reference does not teach the dielectric coating sub-layer based on a partially but not totally oxidized combination of at least two metals. Rather, the Ni-Cr deposition is in the metallic state.

Attached is a copy of European Patent Application 0 657 562 A2 published June 14, 1995. Applicant submits this publication to establish the amount of oxygen required, at various power levels, to provide a purely metallic coating or in the alternative partially oxidized, e.g., a metallic oxide coating.

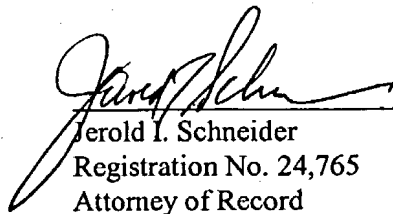
For example, Figure 1 of this publication indicates that a 1.0 Kw power lever, if the amount of oxygen is approximately 7% or less, there will be a metallic titanium coating but if the oxygen level is greater than approximately 7% there will be a titanium oxide coating. Figure 2 provides data for a zirconium coating.

The purpose of submitting this reference is to demonstrate that at the power levels described in the Hartig et al. reference at column 16, lines 39 and 44, there would be a metallic coating and not a metal oxide coating (of nickel and chromium). Applicants submit that at the power levels in the Hartig et al reference, the titanium or zirconium (of the EP reference) would be deposited in metallic and not partially oxidized form. Since, nickel and chromium, the metals of the Hartig reference, are less reactive than the titanium and zirconium of the EP reference, the nickel and chromium of the Hartig et al reference would require even greater levels of oxygen (at the power levels described in the Hartig et al reference) before an oxide coating would be formed. This evidences that the Hartig et al reference was not concerned with partially oxidized coatings and is non-enabling for this feature.

Thus, the rejection based upon Hartig is improper and should be withdrawn.

Respectfully submitted,

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